

News from Ed Markey

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MARKEY TO MEET WITH TSA ADMINISTRATOR HAWLEY

TSA Plan Lifting Ban on Razor-Sharp Scissors Generates Strong Reaction

Washington, DC: Representative Edward Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee and co-sponsor of H.R. 4452, the "Leave All Blades Behind Act", today confirmed that he will meet this week with Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Administrator Kip Hawley to discuss TSA's decision to lift the ban on scissor blades and other sharp tools that could be used by a terrorist or troubled passenger to take over a passenger plane. The ban on these items was put in place after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and TSA plans to permit these items in the passenger cabin of aircraft beginning December 22, 2005. The "Leave All Blades Behind Act" would prevent TSA from taking these items off its prohibited list. The Association of Flight Attendants, the Association of Professional Flight Attendants, air marshals and families of 9/11 victims support efforts to keep the current ban in place.

"TSA" should stand for "Transportation Security Administration", not "Take your Scissors Aboard," Rep. Markey said. "Last Friday, an agitated passenger on a Northwest Airlines flight to Honolulu made threats and charged the cockpit. Thankfully, the flight crew and passengers restrained him and prevented him from causing further damage. We were fortunate the passenger was not armed with a sharp blade such as a weapon-usable metal scissors, which the Bush Administration plans to permit back into the passenger cabin beginning on December 22nd. Flight attendants, air marshals, and families of 9/11 victims all oppose this risky, unwise decision. The Bush Administration should listen to them and immediately abandon its plan to put these dangerous items back into the hands of terrorists or troubled travelers," **Rep. Markey** concluded.

While the TSA has said that it intends to shift resources from searching for such objects as scissors to searching instead for explosives, the agency and the Bush Administration continue to oppose one of the biggest passenger airplane security loopholes identified by the 9/11 Commission last week – commercial cargo placed in the cargo hold of passenger planes. Unlike passengers and their baggage, virtually none of this commercial cargo is physically inspected by anyone, creating a backdoor for explosives that terrorists can exploit. Rep. Markey has led the effort in the Congress to close this gaping loophole as well.

For more information on Rep. Markey's work to close remaining aviation security loopholes check out: www.house.gov/markey.

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